In this paper, I aim to shed light on the rich tapestry of everyday life in Konavle from the 12th to the 14th century, a critical period leading up to the establishment of the Dubrovnik administration in 1427. My analysis centers around personal names from this era, with a particular focus on the 14th century, drawn from a substantial sample of over a thousand male and female names. The findings underscore a pronounced Slavic influence, intertwined with elements of Vlach and Christian origins. Remarkably, while the 12th century bore no record of Christian names, their prevalence began to emerge steadily by the end of the first quarter of the 15th century, accounting for approximately 6.5% of the names. This shift reflects the deliberate actions of the Dubrovnik authorities, who sought to curtail the dominance of Slavic names in favor of Christian alternatives. By the end of the 15th century, this effort had successfully reduced the percentage of Slavic names to below 10%. Moreover, the evolution of Slavic names throughout this period is striking. In the 13th century, very few names from the 12th century resurfaced—a trend that carried into the 14th century and continued into later centuries.

Exploring personal names has unveiled compelling insights into the rich history of Konavle. Most settlement and hamlet names in this region have patronymic origins, tied to the feudal lords who once governed those lands and their serfs. These influential figures predominantly thrived during the 13th and 14th centuries. Take, for instance, the hamlet of Komaje, named after the descendants of Komaje, who was born in the late 13th century. Similarly, Nartice in Pridvorje derives its name from a lord named Nartice, while the settlement of Čilipi honors its founder, illustrating a powerful tradition in which notable estates shaped entire districts. What's particularly fascinating is that the earliest records of these names often precede their modern forms by decades, indicating a dynamic evolution of nomenclature where newer patronymics frequently supplanted older ones. For example, Takmići was originally known as Takmići Ogrejića, after Ogreja Petrović, born around 1320, before it evolved into Ogrejići (or Ogruči). A parallel narrative unfolds with Šujevina, which transitioned from its original connection to Šujevina Radovčić to the more encompassing designation of Radovčići. Initially referring solely to today's Srednje Selo, this name ultimately came to represent the entire settlement. This exploration not only underscores the historical significance of these names but also reveals a timeline that pushes our understanding back nearly a century earlier than previously believed.

Recent discoveries have unveilied the names of several prominent prefects and chieftains of Konavle, previously lost to time. Among the notable findings, we discover Krajiša Miroslavić, the head of Krajina, whose name was recorded in 1366. A decade later, in 1376, we learn about chieftain Radić, whose full name was Radić Đurđević. In 1379, the pivotal figure of Pribil Karan emerges as the prefect of Konavle, setting the stage for a significant transition in leadership. During 1379-1380, we find Tvrtko Vlađević stepping into this important role, further shaping the region's governance. The years between 1381 and 1383 see the prominent figure of

Grubač, who is mentioned repeatedly as prefect. Adding to this rich tapestry of leadership, we encounter Ostoja Diničić from Dinjište (modern-day Masješe in Čilipi), the last prefect from the esteemed Pavlović family before Dubrovnik's administration took the reins. His historical importance is underscored by a landmark decision on June 19, 1426, when the Great Council recognized him wine exports to Ston and Pelješac.

Archival sources reveal the extent of livestock farming in Konavle during the 14th century. Farmers raised a variety of animals, including cows, oxen, donkeys, horses, goats, sheep, and pigs. The primary market for selling surplus livestock was Dubrovnik and the surrounding Commune area. The people of Dubrovnik entered into contracts with Konavle farmers to breed and fatten various types of livestock, including cows, goats, sheep, and pigs, which provided additional income for the farmers. In addition to livestock, the production of cereals was significant, with a notable portion exported to the City. The residents of Dubrovnik actively participated in this agricultural endeavor by contracting for the breeding and training of ploughing oxen while sharing in the profits from the grain produced. Konavle also ensured a sufficient supply of horses for trade caravans through its grazing practices. Furthermore, the people of Dubrovnik primarily imported manure from Konavle, specifically from the area of Obod, for use in gardens and homesteads. The import of timber, rubble, and other goods was also important. Additionally, a joint effort in the production of honey and wax highlights the growth of beekeeping in Konavle. In the realm of falconry, which involves the breeding and training of falcons and other birds for hunting, the falconers of Konavle were at the forefront, establishing the region as a central hub for this prestigious practice. The beautifully carved scenes on medieval tombstones known as "stećci," which depict falcon hunting, serve as evidence of this activity. In Konavle alone, there are at least six such depictions, out of a total of fourteen found in the broader area where "stećci" can be located. This form of hunting was not only a mark of skill but also a demonstration of status among the wealthy nobility, indicating the power and influence of the Konavle nobility compared to others in the surrounding region. These insights pertain primarily to the 13th century, supported by rare historical sources from the end of that century that mention disputes over livestock, including cows, oxen, and contracts related to cattle grazing.

The period leading up to the establishment of the Dubrovnik administration in Konavle was characterized by a complex system of developed feudalism. At the center of this feudal hierarchy was the Bosnian king, who commanded loyalty from influential vassals such as Grand Dukes Radoslav Pavlović and Sandalj Hranić. By 1391, the noble class in Konavle was sharply divided into two factions: one loyal to Pavlović and the other to Sandalj Hranić. Among Sandalj's supporters, Bogeta Rugić of Zastolje emerged as a significant figure, serving as the last prefect until 1419. Meanwhile, Ostoja Dinjičić of Čilipi represented Pavlović's interests until the end of 1426. The feudal lords varied in the size of their fiefs, their income, and the

number of serfs they controlled. At the bottom of the social hierarchy were the unfree people, who had different rights. There have been several examples where these individuals have been mentioned alongside the nobles.

It is important to note the significant expansion of the Dubrovnik commune into its surrounding regions. After acquiring Lastovo in 1252 and Mljet in 1345, the local population successfully retained their lands and privileges, demonstrating their resilience. The Elaphite Islands have historically been home to free peasants, a tradition that also continued in the original area of Astarea. During this era, although the Dubrovnik nobility managed a few estates near the city, they notably lacked significant landholdings. Instead, their strength laid in trade[1], shipping, and urban administration—elements that defined their identity as landless nobles, but propelling the City's economic growth.

In 1333, the authorities of Dubrovnik acquired Pelješac. This expansion continued with the acquisition of the upper parts of the County of Žrnovnica in 1357, the County of Primorje in 1399, and the County of Konavle between 1419 and 1426. This rapid expansion marked a significant shift along both the eastern and western coasts of the Adriatic. With ruthless ambition, the Dubrovnik officials displaced local residents from their homes, lands, and serfs, effectively transforming the nobility into common serfs. Driven by greed and a desire for power, they took control of the land and positioned themselves as the "true" nobility. However, this reckless pursuit came with severe consequences: their actions ultimately led to the loss of crucial territories, including Korčula, Hvar, and Brač in 1417, as well as the Trebinje parish with Vrm in 1431.

The term "vlasteličići," which translates to "minor lords," has become commonly associated with the nobility of Konavle in scholarly discussions. This term was previously used by the author of these lines in this context as well. Its origins can be traced back to the second half of the 19th century when individuals who identified with the Dubrovnik nobility began to adopt it. Specifically, they added noble titles such as "knez" (prince) and "conte" (count) to their names and used the diminutive form "vlasteličić" in a derogatory manner towards a nobility that had ceased to exist over five centuries earlier. In contrast, the people of Dubrovnik have historically shown respect for the residents of Konavle, as far back as the 14th century, treating them as equals. This is exemplified by an event on March 19, 1379, when the Dubrovnik Senate granted permission for six nobles from the most distinguished families of Dubrovnik to visit Konavle for two days of festivities.[2]

[1] On November 5, 1312, Ivanko Sorkočević was fined for refusing to sell meat to Germano de Picinico (LONZA – RÖMER 1992: 188).

[2] KAPETANIĆ 2024: 81.